

## D. LOCAL AREA PLANS

### Purpose and Rationale

Local Area Plans (LAPs) are detailed, place-based land use plans that are consistent with and nested within the Official Community Plan. They provide clear direction for future growth and change, guide the evaluation of development and land use applications within defined areas, and give residents, landowners, applicants, and City staff greater certainty about the type, location, and scale of development that is appropriate and supportable. LAPs complement the broader vision established in the OCP by translating citywide policy into area specific land use, infrastructure, public realm, and implementation guidance.

The OCP's growth strategy focuses new development in identified growth centres and corridors and supports moderate infill across the city. LAPs are a primary tool to plan for that change, integrate land use and transportation, coordinate servicing, and ensure climate action, equity, reconciliation, and community well-being objectives are advanced through implementation. LAPs operate alongside other development application tools in Part D, including Development Approval Information, Growth Contribution Policies, and Development Permit Area designations.

### Plan Types

Three types of LAPs are recognized to reflect different growth contexts in Courtenay:

- **Greenfield Plans** – Mid-level plans for largely undeveloped areas that set the sequence of development, the general land use pattern, and the general location of major transportation routes and public utilities. They are adopted by Council, they may be initiated by the City or landowners and are required before development in Future Growth Areas or any municipal boundary extensions.
- **Infill Plans** – City-initiated plans for OCP-identified Growth Centres and corridors that manage change through strategic intensification and redevelopment, address density ranges and transitions, updated infrastructure and servicing needs, public realm and amenity improvements, heritage and environmental considerations, and implementation tools.
- **Neighbourhood Plans** – plans for smaller geographies that focus on character, design quality, and day-to-day livability. They may be standalone or nested within Greenfield or Infill Plans and provide guidance on built form and streetscape design, site and frontage treatments, heritage protection, specific locations and types of parks and amenities, pathways and local connectors, and other fine-grain elements that shape neighbourhood identity.

LAPs implement OCP direction already set out in Part B, including the requirement for a Local Area Plan prior to development approvals in select areas and the completion of Infill or Neighbourhood Plans in priority locations.

## Status and Applicability

### 1. Consistency and Adoption

LAPs shall be consistent with the OCP and adopted by Council. They become part of the City's land use decision framework and guide rezoning, subdivision, and development permit considerations within the LAP boundary.

### 2. Quantified Capacity

LAPs must include quantified estimates of housing unit capacity and employment floor area at full build out, and identify the assumptions used. These estimates should align with OCP growth allocations and relevant regional targets.

### 3. Monitoring and Reporting

Progress toward LAP targets shall be monitored and reported through the City's five-year OCP review cycle, supported by the OCP's performance monitoring framework and annual reporting practices.

### 4. Hierarchy of Plans

- a. While LAPs are to be consistent with and nested within the OCP, they are also intended to provide granular direction for neighbourhood growth. As such, in the event of a conflict between a LAP and the OCP, the policies of the LAP are to take precedent, unless granted explicit Council direction otherwise.
- b. Where a Neighbourhood Plan is nested within a Greenfield or Infill Plan, the parent LAP governs in the event of conflict, unless granted explicit Council direction otherwise.

## Terms of Reference

### Core Requirements for All LAP's

Each LAP should generally address the following elements:

#### 1. Planning Area and Horizon

Define the study area and its relationship to adjacent areas, along with an appropriate planning horizon that aligns with overall OCP timelines.

#### 2. Vision and Objectives

Articulate a broad vision and objectives for the area that reflect the OCP's core directions and community priorities.

#### 3. Land Use and Development Approach

Provide guidance on the intended land use pattern, development form, and general density considerations suitable for the area context.

#### 4. Mobility and Access

Outline strategies for a connected, multimodal transportation network that supports walking, cycling, transit, and efficient access.

#### 5. Municipal Servicing and Utilities

Identify servicing considerations at a conceptual level, including infrastructure needs and opportunities for sustainable design.

#### 6. Natural Systems and Environmental Management

Address environmental features, constraints and objectives, including watershed boundaries and health, approaches to protect sensitive areas and manage flood or hazard risks.

## 7. Public Realm and Community Amenities

Consider where parks, open spaces, and amenities should be provided to respond to anticipated growth and enhance livability.

## 8. Implementation and Phasing

Provide a high-level approach to sequencing development, infrastructure delivery, and cost-sharing mechanisms where applicable. Address appropriateness of designation of Development Permit Areas to achieve LAP objectives.

## 9. Monitoring and Adaptation

Include a framework for tracking progress and adapting the plan over time as conditions change.

As part of the terms of reference, LAPs are required to include a comprehensive public and interest holder communication and engagement process.

## Additional Terms of Reference by Plan Type

### 1. Infill Plans

- a. **Intensity and Transitions** — detailed directions on density ranges, height, and massing, with clear transition strategies to adjacent neighbourhoods.
- b. **Network and Public Realm Upgrades** — targeted walking, cycling, and transit improvements, curb space management, and placemaking projects that support *10-minute neighbourhoods*.

- c. **Servicing Readiness** — capacity assessments and upgrade strategies for water, sanitary, and rainwater systems, including green infrastructure retrofits.
- d. **Heritage and Environmental Integration** — area specific heritage conservation guidance and ESA protection or restoration measures.
- e. **Implementation Tools** — zoning updates, DPA guidelines, CAC and density benefit frameworks, and a phasing plan linked to amenity delivery.

### 2. Greenfield Plans

- a. **Sequence of Development** — a phasing plan that aligns land release with servicing and transportation capacity, and that minimizes lifecycle costs.
- b. **General Land Use Pattern** — block and lot structure, village or centre locations, and distribution of uses, with quantified capacity for housing and employment.
- c. **Major Routes and Utilities** — general location and functional hierarchy of streets, transit corridors, active mobility routes, and trunk services, with integrated rainwater management.

d. **Parks, Schools, and Community Facilities** — preliminary sites and acquisition strategies for parks, greenways, schools, and civic facilities to support complete communities.

e. **Environmental and Flood Considerations**— *Environmentally Sensitive Area* mapping, riparian setbacks, flood hazard analysis, and nature-based solutions.

f. **Implementation Tools** — servicing agreements, development cost charge alignment, zoning, DPAs, CACs, and conditions of approval tied to phasing.

### 3. Neighbourhood Plans

a. **Character and Design Quality**— detailed built form directions, frontage and streetscape treatments, and guidelines for day-to-day livability.

b. **Fine Grain Public Realm** — specific locations and types of parks, pocket plazas, play spaces, pathway connections, and local connectors.

c. **Housing Choices and Accessibility** — unit mix, universal design targets, and small-scale infill typologies consistent with OCP policies.

d. **Heritage and Identity** — protections for heritage features, and placekeeping or Indigenous design elements that reflect neighbourhood identity.

e. **Implementation Tools** — refined DPA guidelines, minor zoning adjustments, and an action list for near-term public realm improvements.

### Initiation and Adoption

1. LAPs may be initiated by the City or landowners, subject to Council resolution.
  - a. In the event an LAP is initiated by entities other than the City, costs related to the preparation of the LAP may, at Council’s discretion, be shared between the City and the applicant(s) or may be fully funded by the applicant(s).
2. Preparation of a LAP will be guided by Terms of Reference and any Council approved scoping.
3. Adoption of a LAP by Council is required before LAP guidance is used for decisions on rezoning, subdivision, or development permits.
4. Where OCP policy is that an LAP be in place prior to new rezonings for additional density, new uses or other development, applications for rezonings for additional density, new uses or other development are strongly discouraged before Council adopts a Local Area Plan.